



# News Release

## UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

### **437th AIRLIFT WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**

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### **CHARLESTON AFB OPENS ITS MOST MECHANICALLY-ADVANCED FACILITY**

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C.-- The 437<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Group's new corrosion control facility officially opened Nov. 20, becoming the first facility of its kind at Charleston AFB.

The \$18.5 million facility is loaded with features to make corrosion control easier, according to Capt. Jeff Olsen, 437<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Squadron Fabrication Flight commander.

With a 43,000-square-foot service bay, there is plenty of room for personnel to work on the aircraft, Olsen said. Two automated lifts, positioned on either side of the aircraft, allow access to all parts of the plane. The lifts move the length and height of the aircraft and are equipped with all of the utilities needed to get the job done, including compressed air to run sanders and paint guns, and breathing air for corrosion control technicians. Hot and cold water is also available for rinsing off the aircraft after sanding.

The facility is also environmentally friendly, according to Olsen. Water used in corrosion control jobs runs into two large drains on the floor of the facility. The drains empty into a 10,000-gallon tank, where the water is tested for safety before being released.

Four huge fans on one side of the hangar push air from the nose of the aircraft to the tail, at a rate of 500,000 cubic feet per minute, Olsen said. The vents for those fans are shaped like a C-17. At the other end of the hangar, four more fans pull the air through filters, which trap potential pollutants before they can enter the atmosphere.

Computer systems monitor the building and stop potential problems before they can start, Olsen said. For example, if the hangar doors are not sealed closed, the compressed air won't turn on, so technicians can't use their tools. Another system monitors airflow through the facility. This system will shut down compressed air if the filters are clogged.

The facility isn't limited to corrosion control, Olsen said. The floor is designed to handle the stresses of jacking an aircraft, which allows all types of maintenance to be performed there as well.

Before the new facility opened, corrosion control procedures were done in the nose dock, Olsen said. If the temperature or humidity were outside a certain range, painting couldn't be completed.

"Now we can get a better-quality paint job," Olsen said. "We'll be able to control conditions. We're saving time and money in the short term, with less frequent paint jobs. In the long term, we're preventing corrosion for the lifetime of the aircraft, however many decades that ends up being."

So far, corrosion control personnel are enjoying their new workspace.

"I think it's an excellent facility," said Rick Mraz, 437 MXS Fabrication Flight. "Everything here is static. The stands make for a better work environment. It's more comfortable."

**(Story by SSgt Melanie Streeter. This story is public domain. You may use any part of it for your publication or newscast. Interviews are available with key base**

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